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PAUL VIRILIO: THE GREAT MIGRATIONS OF THE FUTURE

NECROPOLITICS FUTURISM, GEOCIDE, MEGA CITIES, MIGRATION, PAUL VIRILIO, REFUGEES, SURPLUS POPULATION

In *The Futurism of the Instant* Paul Virilio envisions a future of interminable migration. A World in transit, mobile: a parade of endless migrants across the globe without stop. The age of nomadism has returned with a vengeance. "What can we say, today, in the age of general *'emportment',* the culture of rootless rage, that is now taking over from the political commitment of the past century, except that the 'escape velocity' generated by technical progress turns us into deportes of a new kind."1 All this leads not to genocide, but rather *geocide* – the exit of cities and habitats of the old economies of sedentary civilization: the ultimate deurbanizing of humanity through temporary zones of migrant intensification. The logistical nightmare ahead is solved by not transporting commodities as in the old industrial age, but of migrants to and fro through the flows of the *Ultracity* – zones of pure capital, where the elite and global corporate enclaves will create their fluid power bases.

Enforced exile, delocalization, exclusion: the logistics of an exodus interminable. No more the staid worlds of homeland and roots, the order of the day is no borders and rootlessness. You are a member of the global family, a migrant with a pass embedded in your bones: an RFID chip slipped seamlessly into your bloodstream and invisible as it is observable to all those tracking devices that will demarcate the boundaries of your movements. How else to secure such a drastic world. Catastrophism. Yes, make the world believe the end is coming, allow their fears to pile up to the point they will do what you want them to do … willingly. The Global Security Network is for your own protection. We will help you survive, just do as we say and you'll live a comfortable happy life under our protection. We'll provide you jobs, security, entertainment. Want it be fun!

The City is no longer a destination but an exit point, a temporary zone for supplying the great caravans of migrants in this glorious future. (Satire is always difficult!) Cities will be portable and moveable, no more the thick-set architecture of permanence; no, now the age of impermanence commences. Just like the great sea vessels that carry stackable containers, the new ultracity will be a stackable metamorphic city of change and non-permanence. The city will be based around logistics rather than the other way round. Since its citizens are now the permanent commodified circuits of the precariot and cognitariat there will only be the endless tracking of their dividualhood rather than their commodified bodies through the hyperlanes of global trafficking. Privacy is a thing of the past. Now you will be a mobile agent of the open transport system of continuous movement through the rhizomatic plenum, a temporary sustainer of a specific code and password, a byte in the dynamic systems of endless labor.

THE TERMINUS OF LAST WISHES

By 2050 there will be One Billion exiles in the world. People who will no longer know a home country, and who will be unwanted by any other. These will be the excluded shadows of a forgotten world where the slums of our present megacities will seem like small paradisial installations compared to the hells of the excluded to come.

> This is the revelation of a fundamentally transpolitical ultracity, where the habitale staying put of bygone days has abandoned the public square to the parking lot, and the uninhabitable circulation of each against all; a universal civil war in which the trajectory of real-time exchanges has supplanted the place of the social bond of domiciliation. (p. 30)

The just-in-time-economy spreads across the interminable zones, leaving in its wake the migrant masses who will sit outside the disrupted gates of Progress like ants in a deathly parade of hunger and endless death cries. This is the future of the 'uninhabitable instant' : it is the progressivism in which it is no longer a matter of leaving in order to get there safe and sound any more so much as getting out in order to clear the terrain for a future 'twilight of places'. (p. 31)

One will seek a place of solitude only to discover it too has migrated beyond the twilight where zero is only another name for capitalist nihil. An end-game without outlet… or terminus.

1. Paul Virilio. The Futurism of the Instant. (Polity, 2010)

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